"Our Oldest Chapel."

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

MORAVIAN CHAPEL,

32, Fetter Lane, London, E.C.

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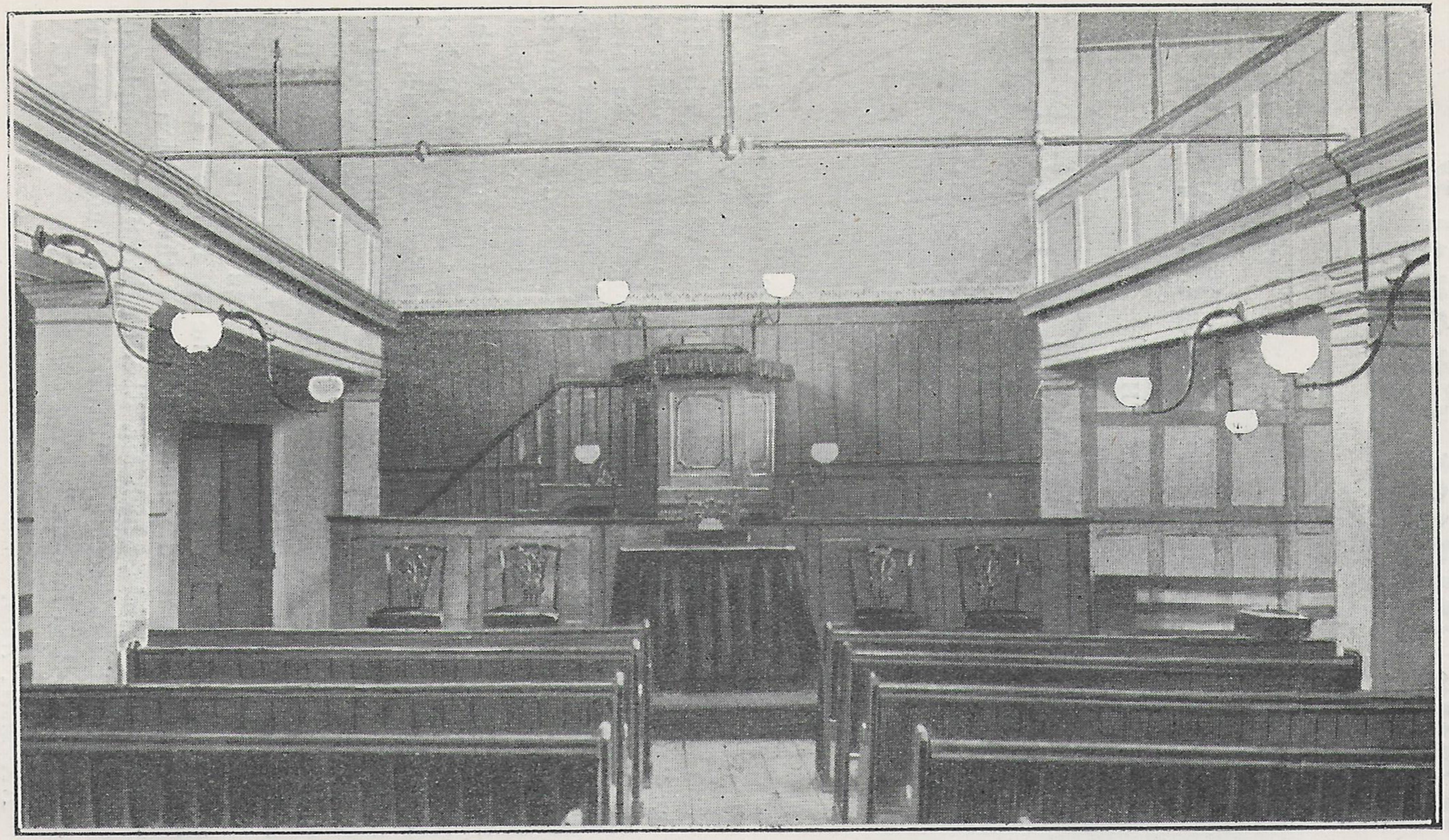
*** The following pages are the outcome of a revision, undertaken at the request of the Council of the London congregation, of an article, entitled "Our Oldest Chapel," which appeared in the "Messenger," for January, 1865. The writer can claim no credit, except that for painstaking investigation; but he takes this opportunity of thanking his many kind friends for their help. Chief among these he would mention the late Rev. J. T. Waugh, the beloved minister of the London congregation; Mr. J. F. Pemsel, its steward, who placed his books and literary treasures at the disposal of the writer and assisted him in his researches; Bishop Benjamin LaTrobe, of Herrnhut, and the Rev. A. Glitsch, the archivarius there; and the Rev. L. G. Hassé, the principal of the Moravian College at Fairfield, and at one time Moravian minister in London. The writer obtained great assistance from a MS. left behind him by the late Rev. J. A. Eberlé, also once minister of the London congregation; and from a very scarce pamphlet on the subject published by the late Bishop A. C. Hassé. The former contained valuable hints for the revision of the "Messenger" article, which Mr. Eberlé evidently contemplated, but was unable to execute. "Other men laboured, but ye are entered into their labours." E.S.C.

November, 1904.



INTERIOR OF THE MORAVIAN CHAPEL, FETTER LANE, LONDON.

OUR OLDEST CHAPEL.

NOT only is our London chapel the oldest of the places of worship belonging to the British Province of our Church and the home of the mother-congregation of that Province, it occupies a spot of considerable interest to British Protestants in general—a spot that may well claim to be considered "holy ground." Situated behind No. 32, Fetter Lane, where the offices of the governing board of our Church in the British Province and of its foreign missions are located, it is not far distant from Great New Street, from which its predecessor had its only entrance, and it has a side entrance from Nevill's Court, one of the few thoroughfares in the City which still retain their old-world features. This portion of the great Metropolis forms part of the ward of Farringdon Without, one of those appendages of the City, the original character whereof it is now impossible to define. Possibly, such outlying portions of the Lord Mayor's dominions were, at first, assigned to the City for purposes of defence, or they might owe their origin to the variety of nationalities which gradually flocked to the metropolis. It is certain that a part of the ward above-mentioned is stated by antiquaries to have formed an important part of Saxon London, as distinguished from the Roman-Celtic Londinium or Augusta. It is equally certain that just beyond its limits are to be found traces of a Danish colony, perpetuated in the name of a church

and parish, entitled St. Clement Danes. The ward of Farringdon Without was not always the smoky scene of a constant and noisy traffic. Rather more than three hundred years ago its broad elevated plateau was covered chiefly with smiling gardens and verdant fields, intersected by the rural road, called the Old Bourne, and by the avenue, then already bounded by opposite rows of buildings, known as Fleet Street. The district was particularly marked by the Inns of Court, quaint old buildings, surrounded by gardens and embowered in ancient trees—extra-parochial—and jealously guarding their precincts against the encroachments of the City authorities. Nearly north stood the town residence of the Bishops of Ely, with its extensive gardens, famous for their saffron-beds, their vines, and their beautiful strawberries, and subsequently granted to Queen Elizabeth's "dancing" chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton. A picture-map of Old London, exhibited in the South Kensington Museum, presents all these features, as they existed about the reign of Henry VIII. This map shows a roadway, running from south to north, from Fleet Street to Holborn, called "Fewtors' Lane" (or Fetter Lane). It was such a back roadway, as may at this time be seen in the outskirts of old towns (not yet affected with a plethora of bricks and mortar)—a rather muddy thoroughfare, bounded by hedges, decked in summer with the white convolvulus and purple nightshade, alternating with semi-rustic palings, beyond which appeared gardens, more or less trimly kept and adorned with civic summer-houses and the like.

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But it is not with the old-world beauties of the spot that we have to deal. It is interesting to us as the site of one of the earliest—if not of the very earliest—of the London "conventicles," belonging to those sturdy Nonconformists to whom we owe the civil and religious liberty we now enjoy, and of the chapel which witnessed

the "settlement" of our London congregation. Two years before that event, the old chapel had been the scene of the historic lovefeast, at the close of which the Wesleys and their followers separated themselves from the other members of the Fetter Lane Society, with whom they had previously worked so lovingly and happily. Meeting at the Foundery, a few evenings later, they commenced the Methodist Churches which have been so blessed to the world.

A tradition, to which more than the ordinary amount of probability is to be attached, informs us that, in the terrible days of Mary the Persecutor, there was, about midway down on the eastern side of Fetter Lane, a carpenter's yard, with its customary sawpit; and that in that sawpit a few of the persecuted Protestants were in the habit of meeting, night after night, for prayer and mutual encouragement and edification. It seems probable, indeed, that some of them were numbered in the ranks of the "noble army of martyrs" of those days. So that it is not to be wondered at that those who met there regarded the spot with feelings akin to veneration; and that, when better times came in the days of Elizabeth, they sought and obtained permission to build a place of worship there—an edifice primitive enough, no doubt, for it was a wooden one. As their means increased, they added to it a place of residence for their minister, more substantially constructed of brick. This has outlasted the storms and tempests of the centuries that have since elapsed. Its ground floor is now used as the vestry, and is familiar to us all on that account; and its wainscoted rooms, large casement windows, deeply-moulded mantelpieces, and dark oak stairs show that it must have been erected in the reign of James I., if not at an earlier period.

It is believed that the builders of the chapel were Puritans, and that they were succeeded by a body of Presbyterians, who speedily found the place "too strait"

for them. At any rate, the wooden structure was pulled down; and a plain, but more capacious, brick chapel was built on the site. The congregation were naturally desirous of preserving the more recently erected minister's house; and they instructed their architect to avoid touching it. So it came to pass that the new chapel was of an irregular form, its walls not standing exactly at right angles with each other, and that the east end was somewhat narrower than the other portions of the edifice, the minister's house encroaching on it. These features are indeed noticeable in our present chapel. The builders of the new chapel were not unmindful of the "hard times" which had befallen their spiritual forefathers in the days of Mary; and that reminiscence and their knowledge of the disfavour with which Nonconformists throughout the kingdom, and especially their brethren north of the Tweed, were regarded by the Stuarts induced them to make provision for their own protection from similar evils. The chapel could only be reached through a long narrow passage (still existing, but occupied entirely by workshops), known as Goldsmith, or Goldsmith's Court, and extending westward from Great New Street. The edifice was hidden by the continuous row of houses which, even at that early date, fringed the east of Fetter Lane and the southern side of Nevill's Court, or Alley, as it was then named; and the tall buildings to the west of Great New Street, then, as now, effectually masked it from the notice of any casual passer-by. So that the congregation could not be considered optimistic, if they thought themselves secure from disturbance, although subsequent events showed that opinion to be erroneous.

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Down to the time of the Commonwealth, we have only the dim light of tradition to guide us; but after the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II., we meet with authentic historical records concerning the chapel

and its fortunes. When the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662, the edifice belonged to the wife of the Rev. John Turner, who was ejected from the living of Sudbury, in Middlesex, because he would not sign the declaration demanded by the new law. He thereupon betook himself to his wife's chapel, where he laboured with acceptance, especially during the time of the Great Plague, when so many of the clergy and their well-to-do parishioners fled from the Metropolis in panic. The Great Plague was followed by the Great Fire, which destroyed many of the City churches; and after it, an Act of Parliament was passed, sanctioning the use of eight of the "conventicles," then existing in London, "for the celebration of divine worship by orthodox ministers, appointed by the Bishop of London." "The New Street Conventicle," as the chapel is named in the Act, was one of these. It is described as consisting of "four rooms, opening into one another, with seventeen pews and divers benches." The churches were rebuilt in due time; and then we are quaintly informed "Fetter Lane Chapel was restored to its rightful owner." During his subsequent ministry there, Mr. Turner was assisted by, among others, the celebrated Richard Baxter, who was arrested, as a "conventicler," at the close of one of the services.

Later on, the chapel was occupied by a body of Independents, whose two first ministers, Doctors Thomas Goodwin and Thankful Owen, had both been presidents of colleges belonging to Oxford University, and ejected thence on their refusal to sign the Act of Uniformity. Stephen Lobb, the third minister of the Independents, established a service for the servant girls in the neighbourhood, which was held in the chapel at the early hour of five every Sunday morning, and was conducted in rotation by six Nonconformist ministers. Benoni Rowe, who succeeded him, was the father-in-law of the noted philanthropist, Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe.

Thomas Bradbury, the next minister, was perhaps the most famous of the Nonconformist divines of the period. He enjoyed the friendship of many of those who held high positions in Church and State, Archbishop Wake, of Canterbury, and Bishop Burnet, of Salisbury, among them. He occupied the pulpit of the chapel, still known as the New Street Conventicle, for twenty years; and it was during his ministry that the famous Sachaverell riots took place, and the old chapel was set on fire by the mob, and so injured by the flames that it had to be rebuilt. Bradbury flourished during the closing years of the reign of Queen Anne, when it was feared that she would be succeeded by the Pretender, and that Romanism would once more be the established religion of the land. Bradbury threw himself heartily into the movement to secure the Hanoverian succession. We are told that, on the morning of August 1st, 1714, on his way to his service at Fetter Lane, he was overtaken by Burnet, who had been summoned to the palace on account of the critical condition of the Queen. The Bishop promised that, if the death of her Majesty should take place before the close of the morning service, he would send a messenger to the chapel, instructed to inform the preacher of the fact by dropping a handkerchief over the front of the west gallery. The expected event happened; and Bradbury was enabled in his concluding prayer to return thanks to God "for the deliverance of these kingdoms from the designs of their enemies," and to implore His blessing on the head of King George and upon the House of Brunswick. He afterwards gloried in the fact that, in this way, he was the first person who publicly announced the change of dynasty, and he showed his hatred of the Stuarts by preaching a sermon on the occasion of the funeral of Queen Anne, from the text, "Go, see this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter." Bradbury subsequently parted from the congregation, owing to a dispute, chiefly of a

pecuniary character, and ministered to another Independent body, who worshipped in New Court, Carey Street, till his death in 1759. He at one time came into collision with James Hutton, on account of his opposition to the selection the Moravians made of one of the early missionaries to Pennsylvania.*

The Rev. Thomas Tingey, the next minister of the Great Meeting House, as it was at that time called, only enjoyed a pastorate of about eight months; he was elected in the early part of 1729, and died in the autumn of the same year. He was succeeded by the Rev. Richard Rawlin, who was publicly recognised in the following year. Two years later, the congregation removed into a new chapel they built for themselves on the west side of Fetter Lane; and the old meeting house remained untenanted till 1740, when it was hired by Hutton for the Fetter Lane Society, out of which our own congregation was eventually formed.

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This Fetter Lane Society was the outcome of one of those "religious (or originally vestry) societies," so called because at first they met in the vestries of the parish churches, to which Englishmen of the times of the later Stuarts owed the preservation of true religion in the country. The state of the Churches, Established and Nonconformist alike, was truly deplorable, and religion was at a very low ebb in town and country at the time when these societies arose; and though their tenets and practice savour much of reliance on good works for salvation, they did a good work in their day. Soon the vestries were not large enough for the accommodation of their members; and then they held their gatherings in private houses and other places where they could find room. One of them met in the house of the Rev. John Hutton, the father of James Hutton, so prominent a

* Benham, "Hutton," p. 123.

figure in the history of the early connection of the Brethren's Church with Britain. The older Hutton graduated at King's College, Oxford, becoming M.A. in 1702. He afterwards obtained preferment in the Church of England, but was deprived of his living because he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the House of Brunswick; and he commenced a boys' school in College Street, Westminster. Here he opened his house on Sunday evenings for the meetings of one of these religious societies. His son James had been apprenticed to a bookseller, and had made the acquaintance of the Wesleys and other leading Methodists during a business visit to Oxford. On the two brothers visiting London, and staying with their brother Samuel, who lived next door to the Rev. John Hutton, James invited them to the meetings of this society; and at one of them, John preached very earnestly and solemnly from the words, "One thing is needful" (Luke x. 42). As a result, James and his sister and some of their companions became awakened to a sense of their dangerous state by nature, and the prayers and exhortations of Wesley were greatly blessed to them. This was on the eve of Wesley's historic voyage to Georgia, when he became acquainted with the Moravian Brethren, who were on their way to Georgia, to spread the knowledge of the Saviour among the Indians there. His intercourse with them, and especially with Spangenberg, the leader of the little band, induced him, on his return to England, to write in his journal the confession, "I, who went to America to convert others, was not converted myself."

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In 1736, James Hutton established a bookselling business at the "Bible and Sun, in Little Wild Street, near Lincoln's Inn Fields"; and here he continued the meetings that had been held at his father's house. Squire Thorald, a worthy layman, expounded the Scriptures at

them and led those who met there in prayer; and William Holland, afterwards the first elder of our congregation, and perhaps the first Englishman to join the Brethren's Church, was a regular attendant at these meetings, and has left us a valuable, though very brief, history of the society, of the "settlement" of the London congregation, and of the commencement of the Wesleyan Church. James also opened two other rooms in Aldersgate Street and Islington for similar meetings. Count Zinzendorf, landing in England January 19, 1737, organised a religious society of awakened Germans, who met once a week or more frequently. These people were, at the Count's request, to be specially visited by the three Moravian Brethren, Peter Böhler, Fred W. Neisser, and George Schulius, who passed through London in 1738 on their way to Georgia and Carolina. From their lips the awakened friends of James Hutton heard now for the first time of the all-availing merits of the Saviour. Böhler, ere he left, organised a small company of six or eight persons, who had profited by his preaching, as a religious society, on May 1-12, 1738. The document subscribed by the members declared that this association was formed "by the advice of Peter Böhler." The rules to be observed were thirty-three in number, and were afterwards printed.*

The meetings of this flock were at first held in Hutton's own house, where the first "bands" were kept; but before the end of the year, the numbers attending the gatherings became so large that a new home was found to be absolutely necessary. Accordingly, Hutton rented for the society what Holland calls "a large room in Fetter Lane," whence it obtained its title of the Fetter Lane Society. The position of this room cannot be determined. All that we know with certainty is that it it stood at the head of one of the many courts that

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* Benham, "Hutton," pp. 29-32.

diverged from the lane at that time ; for Mölther tells us that, once, when he was preaching in it, "not only our room, but also the adjoining court-yard, was entirely crowded with hearers." It was the scene of the first recorded watch-night service, held in England. Wesley* tells us that, on the night of December 31, 1738—

> Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our love-feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, "We praise Thee, O God ; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."

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The following year was one of great activity ; and the society continued to increase in numbers, in spite of the appearance of the "rift in the lute" which resulted in the separation from it of the Wesleys and their adherents. In the early part of 1740, the room was found to be too small for the meetings; and Hutton took the Great Meeting House on a seven years' lease, dating from Midsummer. Scarcely had the society entered on its tenancy, when the differences between the Wesleys and their followers, on the one side, and those who had attached themselves to the teaching of the Moravian Brethren, on the other, became accentuated. We find, under date, July 16, 1740, the following entry in Wesley's "Journal" :—

> One asked whether they would suffer Mr. Wesley to preach at Fetter Lane. After a short time, it was answered, "No ; this place is taken for the Germans."

And four days later, at the close of a love-feast in the chapel, Holland tells us—

> Mr. Wesley read some points to the society, which he had written down, and asked if they were what they believed to be true? A person having answered "Yes,"

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* "Journal," January 1st, 1739.

> he declared those principles to be erroneous; and desired those members of the society who were of his opinion to follow him. So he went out of the society, and several followed him.

Wesley gives the points at issue in his "Journal," and adds that eighteen or nineteen others went with him out of the chapel. They met a few evenings afterwards at the Foundery, and formed the society which in due course developed into the Wesleyan Methodist Church. There is no doubt that this separation was the result of faults on both sides, and that regrettably bitter things were said by each during its progress. It lasted for many years—in fact, till after the death of Zinzendorf—in spite of the repeated efforts of Zinzendorf himself, of Wesley, Böhler, Spangenberg, and others to repair the breach. It was reserved for Benjamin LaTrobe to bring about an understanding, under which both Churches have worked amicably together, in the separate spheres the Great Head of the Church has assigned to each. This is not the place to discuss the disputes between the good men of that time. Nor do we desire to do so. We, as Englishmen, owe too much to them all to desire to publish their short-comings. Doubtless, they have long since met in the Heaven of perfect harmony, and thoroughly understand each other now. Then, however, to quote the words of Dr. Stevens, in his "History of Methodism":—

> The breach was irreparable; and it is well, perhaps, that it was so. Time allayed the irritations of both parties. Each had its peculiar mission in the world; each has since cordially recognized the other; but, had it not been for this temporary disturbance, Wesley and his associates might have been merged in the Moravian body, assuredly not with the advantages which have resulted to the world from the distinct organization of Methodism.

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Whitefield, who had been a leading member of the Fetter Lane Society, was in Georgia at the time that Wesley separated from it. While he was there, he

imbibed strong Calvinistic opinions—insisting particularly on the most extreme views about election and reprobation; so that it was impossible for the Brethren to work with him. But for all that, a very brotherly spirit marked their intercourse. In spite of Hutton refusing to print and publish his sermons, they frequently dined together; and Whitefield was one of the earliest members of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, meetings of which, held in the chapel, he frequently addressed. This society was commenced in the year after Wesley left the Brethren; and, to quote the words of Bishop A. C. Hassé, in his "United Brethren in England from 1641 to 1742," "though it languished during the period of the Brethren's financial difficulties, it was renewed in 1768, and still exists in blessing."

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After Wesley and his followers left the chapel, the members of the society asked the representatives of the Moravian Church who were present to become their directors, a request which they declined, though, they added, they would willingly be their servants. In a short time, Spangenberg was sent over to take charge of the work in Britain; and two years later—on November 10th, 1742, he "settled" the society, or rather seventy-two of its members, as the London congregation of the Moravian Church.

From that time, the history of the chapel is that of the London congregation—nay, we may almost claim that it is the history of the British province of our Church; and our space will not permit us to attempt to detail that. We may, however, briefly sketch the changes which befell the old chapel, prefixing our account of them by a list of the ministers who have served the congregation. The first stated "labourer" of the London congregation was John Gambold, a native of Haverfordwest, and a son of a clergyman of the Church of England. Following in his father's footsteps,

he was in due time ordained, and obtained preferment in that Church. Becoming a close friend of the Wesleys, he joined the Fetter Lane Society; and when the two brothers left that society, he found it necessary to separate himself from them, to their mutual sorrow. Continuing a member of the society, and afterwards of the London congregation, he severed his connection with the Church of England; and afterwards taught the girls in the school established by the Brethren at Broadoaks, in Essex. It was held in the house of a widow lady, named Claggett, one of the office-bearers of the congregation; and his acceptance of the duties of the office gave offence to his two old friends, and was the cause of the publication by Charles Wesley of what Benham calls "some severe lines,"* animadverting on the step he had taken. In 1744, Gambold was ordained, and became minister of the London congregation. He was the first Englishman who received ordination at the hands of the authorities of our Church; and a few years later he was consecrated a bishop—the first of our nation to be thus honoured by a Synod of the Unitas Fratrum. He ministered to the congregation till 1768, when he resigned, on account of the infirmities of age, and retired to his native town. Here he resided till his death in 1771, giving such help as he could in the ministry to the recently-established congregation there. His twenty-four years' ministry in London was longer than that of any of his successors, as will be evident from a perusal of the following list of them:—

1768—1775.	George Tranecker.
1775—1780.	John Rogers.
1780—1782	Benjamin LaTrobe and Charles J. Clemens.
1782—1783	Thomas Greenfield.
1783—1790.	James Swertner.
1790—1792.	Samuel T. Benade.

* "Gambold," pp. 40-43.

1792—1796.	Ch. Ignatius LaTrobe.
1797—1802.	John Hawksworth.
1802—1804.	G. W. Horne.
1804—1807.	John Swertner.
1807—1811.	John Church.
1811—1813.	Ignatius Montgomery.
1813—1821.	Henry, 55th Count Reuss.
1821—1826.	Christian Fred. Harke.
1826—1830.	William Okely.
1831—1833.	William Wisdom Essex.
1833—1836.	James LaTrobe.
1836—1837.	William Edwards.
1837—1841.	Nathaniel Rea.
1841—1842.	W. W. Essex (second time).
1842—1847.	William Ellis.
1847—1849.	Benjamin Beck.
1850—1852	John Pearce Libbey.
1852—1854	Godfrey Clemens.
1854—1857.	John Miller.
1857—1861.	J. A. Eberlé.
1861—1863	William Taylor.
1863—1867.	Henry Okely Essex.
1867—1872.	Alexander C. Hassé.
1872—1891.	John A. Porter.
1891—1895.	Leonard G. Hassé.
1895—1904.	J. T. Waugh.
1904— ...	John Norman Libbey.

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The days of the Great Meeting House were now drawing to a close. As the termination of its lease to the Brethren approached, the congregation discovered that it was in a very bad state of dilapidation and that it needed extensive repairs, if they were to continue to worship beneath its roof in comfort or even in safety. So they considered the propriety of removing elsewhere, at any rate, for a time; and having, in reply to an advertisement "for a meeting-house for our use during the repairs of our chapel," to quote the words of the diary, obtained many offers, they opened negotiations with their landlord for the renewal of their lease of the chapel and its repair. They visited one or two of the chapels offered them, and eventually agreed to hire, what

Benham calls, "a large Baptist meeting-house, in White's Alley, near Little Moorfields, capable of holding seven or eight hundred people." The first service was held in it in April, 1747; and it continued in the possession of the Brethren till the end of 1755, there being at one time a possibility of a second congregation being established in it.*

It was eventually found that it would be better to rebuild Fetter Lane Chapel, as it was now called, "rather than only to repair it, because the difference in the cost would only be from £20 to £30." On April 8th, 1748, the landlord granted the Brethren a new lease of the chapel, and agreed to contribute £150 towards the cost of rebuilding it and to advance £100 on yearly interest. When the preliminaries were all settled, the work of rebuilding the chapel was vigorously carried on. The diary tells us that the pulling down of the old meeting-house was commenced on the 3rd of April, and that on the 26th of June following the new chapel was opened. The record of this event runs thus :—

> We assembled at 8 a.m., and Johannes de Watteville dedicated our Fetter Lane Chapel. The congregation was present; and when we had sung some verses, we kneeled down, and Johannes prayed aloud that our dear Father would hold His hand over the house; that the Lord would reveal Himself to many thousand souls there; and that the Holy Spirit would bless the preaching of the Word and glorify the death of the Saviour.†

So the old chapel, which witnessed the severance of the connection between the Wesleys and their followers and the "settlement" of the London congregation, disappeared. In all probability, the new one was built on the

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* Benham, "Hutton," pp. 197-198.

† In the "Disciple House Diary," it is stated that Böhler dedicated the chapel, which had been re-built; but the date is not given.

lines, if not on the very foundations, of the old one; and we may safely assume that some of the old fittings were retained in it. It is pretty certain, too, although there is no direct mention of it, that the east wall of the chapel—that between it and the Goldsmiths' Hall—was not then rebuilt, for an entry in the diary, dated, October 31, 1752, tells us that—

> The wall of the hall being old, and the chapel and hall wall not being very firm, two buttresses were fixed against it.

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When the chapel was rebuilt, the entrance from Nevill's Court was constructed. It was the principal means of access to the chapel and of egress from it for more than a quarter of a century; and as we all know, it is still in use.

The diary, for January 23, 1750, informs us that—

> To-day an alteration was made with respect to the pulpit, the door to it being now from the hall, so that the chapel and hall manifestly belong together, and, may be considered either as one place of public worship, or as nave and chancel.

This explains the appearance which the interior of the chapel presents in the engravings of the time. They represent it as a lofty edifice, with galleries on both sides and at the west end,* and with a high pulpit at

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* Soon after the "settlement" of the congregation, a small organ was placed in the west gallery to the great joy of the brethren and sisters of that day; and an amusing rhyming correspondence between the Brethren Christian Ignatius LaTrobe (who played it at its inauguration) and West, still in existence, tells us that it was succeeded by a larger one in 1796. This may be considered our present organ, although an entry in the congregation diary, under date, Nov. 14, 1845, tells us that "our new organ was used for the first time." But it adds, "This instrument contains in it the best part of the old organ, together with some new stops, bellows, machinery, &c." The organ has been repaired several times since then. In 1899, it was as radically improved as it was in 1845.

the east end; the latter is unprovided with stairs, and is evidently entered from a room at the back. The chapel was lighted by two rows of windows on each side. Fixed benches ran round the wainscoted walls, and the middle was occupied by moveable seats, without backs. The roof was supported by plain wooden pillars, three on each side. Indeed, one cannot but be struck with the similarity of the appearance which the chapel then presented to that at the present time. Some necessary alterations were made as years rolled by. These we shall notice as we proceed with our narrative.*

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From the very commencement of the congregation, the want of a burial-ground of their own was acutely felt by the Brethren; and the diary records several attempts to obtain one. But it was not till after the purchase of Lindsay House, Chelsea, and the adjoining property, in 1751, that the need was met. The plans for laying out the whole estate (it was intended to form a settlement like those existing on the Continent, on which the name of "Sharon" was bestowed) included a burial-ground, with chapel and clergy house. Only some features of the extensive plan were carried out, at a cost of £25,000; and after the lapse of twenty-one years, all the property was sold, with the exception of the burial-ground, chapel, and clergy house. These remained in

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* That our ancestors were somewhat careless in their observance of ecclesiastical arrangements is shown by the fact that the chapel stands in two parishes, the boundary between that of St. Bride and that of St. Dunstan-in-the-West passing just in front of the pulpit. Hence, during the service, the minister is in the former and the congregation in the latter. On this account also, the eastern window of the lower tier, on the south, used to have a sash, to admit the passage of a boy when the parish authorities "beat the bounds" on Maunday Thursday. This disappeared in 1875, when the windows were removed, consequent on the construction of the warehouse and library (now our hall) in the garden of No. 32, Fetter Lane.

the hands of the governing board of the Unity till 1771, when they were bought by the London congregation, to whom they still belong. Services were held in the chapel from time to time, as occasion presented itself; and eventually it was leased, as a school, to the committee of a neighbouring Church. As the nineteenth century neared its close, arrangements were made whereby our minister conducts a Thursday evening service in the Clockhouse, as the chapel is now locally named, the evening Sunday school being subsequently commenced there. An open-air service is also held on the neighbouring river bank on Sunday evenings during the summer.

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The year 1777 witnessed an important change in our ownership of Fetter Lane Chapel. In that year, the congregation was able to secure a lease for four hundred years of the chapel and the adjoining house in Chapel Place, and of No. 32, Fetter Lane, at the annual ground rent of £50. The latter house was bought for the double purpose of being the residence of the minister (a use to which it was put till 1865) and of opening "a direct passage out of Fetter Lane to our chapel." So the Memorabilia for the year informs us. The passage was completed in the following year, and is still the principal entrance to the chapel. On the 5th of November, 1776, the Brethren obtained a lease of the hall at the back of the chapel, with the right of way to it through Goldsmith Court, so that there were now three entrances into the chapel, and the congregation rejoiced in the fact that they had "a compleat seat in London."

But this did not exempt them from persecution and anxiety. During the No Popery Riots of 1780—those to which the mob were incited by Lord George Gordon—the chapel had a narrow escape of sharing the fate of its predecessor in the time of Queen Anne, when, as we have seen (page 8), it was burnt by the mob during the Sacheverel disturbances. Possibly, misled by the name,

Moravians,* still borne by our Church in the British and American provinces, they thought that the Brethren were Roman Catholics. At one time, the danger appeared so imminent that it was considered necessary to remove the single sisters from their residence, adjoining the chapel, and to distribute them among the houses of the brethren and sisters. Every precaution that could be thought of was taken for the safety of the chapel and the adjoining property. Thus, the diary tells us that—

> A proper watch was regulated . . . . of such brethren as should be able to speak in a proper manner to the mob.

And it adds, under date, June 7th—

> A number of people, most of whom seemed to be of the rioters, in blue cockades, assembled about ten o'clock this night, before the gate of our chapel, knocking against it with great violence. However, the gate being opened, no one attempted to come in; and they soon dispersed. Our neighbours in Fetter Lane, who could not comprehend why we should be considered as Roman Catholics, ... now that the mob had left us, supposing our chapel to be the safest place in this street, carried their furniture, plate, and other goods of value into it.

Our good Lord blessed the means which the Brethren took for the safety of the chapel and the surrounding premises, and no injury was done to any of the property. The week closed, to adopt the words of the diary,

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* A somewhat similar experience befell the Brethren in 1744, when, under the same mistaken notion of the connection of the Moravians and Papists, the schools at Broadoaks were attacked, and were only preserved from violence by the forethought of Bro. Metcalf, at that time in charge of them, who showed the leaders of the mob over the house, and convinced them of their mistake. (*See* "Hutton," pp. 135-137.) One would have thought that these experiences would have induced the discontinuance of the title. But we all know that this was not the result, and some of us think that the name militates against the success of our Church in Great Britain at the present time.

"with singing in fellowship the praises of our great Saviour"; and on June 13—

> Everything being quiet about the chapel, the single sisters returned to their own habitation and cheerfully settled themselves again at their work; and all things were brought into their proper order.

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The lease of Goldsmith's Hall expired at Lady Day, 1801; and as the congregation were unable to renew it, the committee were engaged, during the summer months of the previous year, in making the alterations to the chapel, rendered necessary by the prospective vacation of the hall, and in thoroughly repairing the former. The services were conducted in the hall while this was being done. Ever since the year 1750, the entrance to the pulpit had been by a door from the hall, high up in the east wall; but when the latter was rebuilt, the pulpit was lowered and fixed on the pillar, which still supports it, and the stairs by which it has since been reached were constructed. The screen which hides the lower portion of the supporting pillar from the view of the congregation, and before which the liturgist's table stands, was added at this time. It was provided with forms on each side of the table for the accommodation of assisting ministers and others, which have been removed in quite recent times; and in all probability the screen at the other end of the chapel, which separates the vestibule, known as the Nursery,* from it, was placed in its position at the same time. The present roof was then built. On December 23rd of that year, after the congregation had taken possession of their renovated chapel, they held a farewell service in the hall, at which, the diary somewhat quaintly informs us, "we fellowshiply thanked our dear Lord for the blessings we had enjoyed in that place."

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* This name is said to have been given to the vestibule because little children were at one time kept there during the services, so as not to disturb the worshippers in the chapel.

After 1800, there is no record of any alteration being made in the structure of the chapel till 1830, when the south wall was rebuilt; and then the history of the edifice ran its accustomed course till 1865, when No. 32, Fetter Lane, was let for commercial purposes, it having been deemed advisable for the minister to be "housed" in more airy premises. This had an unforeseen effect on the comfort of the worshippers in the chapel. When the lease was drawn up, by an unfortunate oversight, the right to reach the vestibule by the front door and the passage connected with it was not reserved to the congregation. The tenant refused us permission to make use of it; and we were compelled to reach the chapel through the Nevill's Court door and the entrance from Chapel Place. This continued till the middle of 1867, when an agreement was come to, by which we obtained the use of our own front door—that from Fetter Lane, on payment of an annual rent of £10.

The year 1875 witnessed some very noticeable changes in the interior of the chapel. By this time the lease of No. 32, Fetter Lane had expired; and circumstances had occurred which made it desirable for the governing board of the British province, who had been located at Ockbrook for some years, to return to London. They therefore leased the house from the congregation; and the necessary alterations were made to enable them to carry on the business of the Church. Among these was the erection of the warehouse and library in the garden behind the house. The latter blocked up the lower range of windows on the south side of the chapel, and necessitated the piercing of the gallery so as to admit light. New windows were put in on the north and south sides of the chapel; the pulpit was again lowered, and its sounding-board removed; and a brass-plate, containing the names of several children, whose remains were interred in ground to the east of the chapel, which has long since passed out of the possession of the congregation, was

removed from the eastern pillar on the south side to the inner side of the screen, separating the Nursery from the rest of the chapel. The interments mentioned took place before the acquisition of the burial ground at Chelsea.

Nothing further of importance befell the structure of the chapel till the early part of 1892, when it was found desirable to obtain professional guidance as to its condition. Two architects were therefore consulted, and they both reported that it needed considerable repair. They expressed an opinion that in all probability it would last for about twenty years; but pointed out the necessity of tieing the timbers of the roof securely together and bracing the eastern and western walls. Of course, these recommendations were given effect to: but by the summer of 1904 it was found that the roof had become dilapidated and that additional supports to it were necessary. The latter have somewhat changed the interior of the chapel.

In 1902, the Brethren purchased the house adjoining No. 32, Fetter Lane, it having been found desirable to make additions to the provincial offices and the accommodation for missionaries and others visiting London on business; and, as a consequence the Provincial Board vacated the library, to the south of the chapel. This was fitted up as a hall, for the use of the congregation; and it has been found very useful.

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The chapel built in 1748 remains to this day. It has been the scene of many exceedingly solemn and deeply impressive gatherings and services; and in it the Lord our Saviour has most graciously made known His blessed presence to His waiting people! Here, too, He has not left Himself without a witness, but for very many years verified His own loving word: "Lo! I am with you alway even to the end of the world." To Him be all the glory!